

Public Health “Stay at Home” Order FAQs

Q. What does this order do?

A. This order requires that we, starting at 11:59 p.m. on March 19, 2020, residents in Sacramento County are to stay at their place of residence unless performing an essential duty. For most people, this means you and those you live with should remain at home. You are allowed to leave your home for specified reasons to make sure you have the necessities of life such as getting food and medical supplies. You are also allowed to go outside to take care of pets, go on a walk, exercise outside, and just get outside, so long as you do not congregate in a group and maintain at least six feet of distance between you and other people.

Q. How is this Order different than the Directive previously put out by Public Health?

A. Unlike the Directive put out on March 17, 2020, by Public Health, this is a legal Order issued under the authority of California law. You are required to comply.

Q. What does this order mean?

A. The “stay at home” Order means to stay in your home and not leave unless necessary for one of the designated exceptions listed in the Order. Some reasons you would leave your home are to get food, to get a prescription, to see a doctor, to go to work if your work is essential as defined in the Order, to take your child(ren) to and from childcare that is authorized under this Order, and to help people you care for get the things they need to live and be healthy and safe.

Q. What is the difference between “staying at home” and “social distancing”?

A. Staying home is a more rigorous form of social distancing. There are some differences. Staying at home means:

- only going out for “essential activities,” to work for an “essential business,” or for “essential travel” as those terms are defined in the Order,
- stay 6 feet or more away from others
- no formal gathering

The other principles of social distancing and mitigative hygiene will continue to be applied whenever feasible. These include washing hands, using hand sanitizer, disinfecting surfaces, not going out if sick, and staying at least six feet away from others.

Q. When does the order go into effect?

A. This Order goes into effect at 11:59 p.m. on March 19, 2020.

Q. How long will the order last?

A. The Order is currently set to be in place until April 7, 2020, or until it is extended, rescinded, superseded, or amended in writing by the Health Officer.

Q. Is the Order mandatory or just guidance?

A. Yes, it is mandatory. This is a legal Order issued under the authority of California law. You are required to comply. Also, it is critical for everyone to follow the Order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect themselves, their loved ones, friends, neighbors and the whole community. All persons, businesses, and other entities are required to comply if they do not fall within the exemptions that are specified in the Order.

Q. What are “essential activities”?

A. Essential activities include:

- To engage in activities or perform tasks essential to their health and safety, or to the health and safety of their family or household members (including, but not limited to, pets), such as, obtaining medical supplies or medication, visiting a health care professional, or obtaining supplies needed to work from home.
- To obtain necessary services or supplies for themselves and their family or household members, or to deliver those services or supplies to others, such as, canned food, dry goods, fresh fruits and vegetables, pet supply, fresh meats, fish, and poultry, and any other household consumer products, and products necessary to maintain the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences.
- To engage in outdoor activity, provided the individuals comply with Social Distancing Requirements, such as, walking, hiking, biking, running or equestrian activities.
- To perform work providing essential products and services at an Essential Business or to otherwise carry out activities specifically permitted in this Order, including Minimum Basic Operations.
- To care for a family member or pet in another household.
- To attend private gatherings of not more than six nonrelatives in a home or place of residence. Participants should practice Social Distancing Requirements at all times at such gatherings.

Q. Why is this order in place?

A. Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus in the general public, which is now a pandemic according to the World Health Organization, there is a public health emergency throughout the County. Making the problem worse, some individuals who contract the COVID-19 virus have no symptoms or have mild symptoms, which means they may not be aware they are carrying and spreading the virus. Because even people without symptoms can transmit the disease, and because evidence shows the disease is easily spread, gatherings can result in preventable transmission of the virus. The scientific evidence shows that at this stage of the emergency, it is essential to slow virus transmission as much as possible to protect the most vulnerable and to prevent the health care system from being overwhelmed. One proven way to slow the transmission is to limit interactions among people to the greatest extent practicable. By reducing the spread of the COVID-19 virus, this Order helps preserve critical and limited healthcare capacity in the County.

Q. Why now?

A. With 40 cases of confirmed COVID-19 in the County, and three deaths, including a significant and increasing number of suspected cases of community transmission, this Order is necessary to slow the rate of spread and the Health Officer will re-evaluate it as further data becomes available.

Q. Am I allowed to leave my home while this Order is in effect?

A. Yes. Individuals may leave their place of residence to acquire or receive essential services or supplies to ensure the health and safety of yourself and your family, engage in outdoor activity that does not involve close contact with other people, obtain services and supplies for yourself and your family, and to perform employment functions that are permissible under the Order

Q. Should I stock up on necessities such as food and medicines?

A. No. You will continue to be able to purchase these items whenever you need them, as stores selling necessary items like grocery stores, pharmacies, and hardware stores will remain open. Please continue to buy normal quantities of these items on the same schedule you normally do. This will ensure that there is enough for everyone.

Q. Will all business offices and stores be required to close? What are “Essential Businesses”?

A. No, “Essential Businesses” may stay open and their employees may leave home to go to work. The Order includes the following list of essential businesses:

- Healthcare Operations and Essential Infrastructure;
- Grocery stores, certified farmers’ markets, farm and produce stands, supermarkets, food banks, convenience stores, and other establishments engaged in the retail sale of canned food, dry goods, fresh fruits and vegetables, pet supplies, fresh meats, fish, and poultry, and any other household consumer products (such as cleaning and personal care products). This includes stores that sell groceries and also sell other nongrocery products, and products necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences;
- Food cultivation, including farming, livestock, and fishing;
- Businesses that provide food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals;
- Newspapers, television, radio, and other media services;
- Gas stations and auto-supply sales and auto-repair, and related facilities;
- Banks and related financial institutions;
- Hardware stores;
- Plumbers, electricians, exterminators, and other service providers who provide services that are necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences, Essential Activities, and Essential Businesses;
- Businesses providing mailing and shipping services, including post office boxes;
- Educational institutions—including public and private K-12 schools, colleges, and universities—for purposes of facilitating distance learning or performing essential functions, provided that social distancing of six-feet per person is maintained to the greatest extent possible;
- Laundromats, drycleaners, and laundry service providers;

- Restaurants and other facilities that prepare and serve food, but only for delivery or carry out. Schools and other entities that typically provide free food services to students or members of the public may continue to do so under this Order on the condition that the food is provided to students or members of the public on a pick-up and take-away basis only. Schools and other entities that provide food services under this exemption shall not permit the food to be eaten at the site where it is provided, or at any other gathering site;
- Businesses that supply products needed for people to work from home. Businesses that supply other essential businesses with the support or supplies necessary to operate;
- Businesses that ship or deliver groceries, food, goods or services directly to residences.
- Airlines, taxis, and other private transportation providers providing transportation services necessary for Essential Activities and other purposes expressly authorized in this Order;
- Home-based care for seniors, adults, or children;
- Residential facilities and shelters for seniors, adults, and children;
- Professional services, such as legal or accounting services, when necessary to assist in compliance with legally mandated activities;
- Childcare facilities providing services that enable employees exempted in this Order to work as permitted. To the extent possible, childcare facilities must operate under the following mandatory conditions:
 - Childcare must be carried out in stable groups of 12 or fewer (“stable” means that the same 12 or fewer children are in the same group each day).
 - Children shall not change from one group to another.
 - If more than one group of children is cared for at one facility, each group shall be in a separate room. Groups shall not mix with each other.
 - Childcare providers shall remain solely with one group of children.

Q. What if my business is not considered an Essential Business? Does this Order require that I shut down my business facility?

A. You and your employees are allowed to perform “Minimum Basic Operations” on site at your work place, so long as employees maintain a distance of six feet from one another to the greatest extent feasible. Minimum Basic Operations include: The minimum necessary activities to maintain the value of the business’s inventory, ensure security, process payroll and employee benefits, or for related functions. The minimum necessary activities to facilitate employees of the business being able to continue to work remotely from their residences. Your employees can also work from home if their jobs are ones that can be performed remotely.

Visit the website for COVID-19 information and the Sacramento County Public Health Order:
www.saccounty.net/COVID-19

